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IN WHAT RESPECTS
MAY THE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE POOR LAW
BE IMPROVED ?

A PAPER READ AT BRISTOL, AT THE REQUEST OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION,

BY

ELISHA ROBINSON,

A MAGISTRATE FOR THE CITY OF BRISTOL, AND FORMERLY CHAIRMAN OF THE
BRISTOL BOARD OF GUARDIANS.

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IN WHAT RESPECTS MAY THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE POOR LAW BE IMPROVED?

WITHOUT preface, I reply—By a more thorough classification of those who claim support or assistance from the public rates. The complaints in reference to the administration of the Poor Law may be summarized under two heads:—First, That the poor are harshly treated; and, second, That their cost is an excessive tax upon the productive industry of the country.

I have a sufficiently good opinion of the benevolence of rate-payers to think that, if the former complaint were unfounded, the latter would scarcely exist—viz., I believe that if the really unfortunate—the sick, the aged, and the infantile portion of the poor, were treated as they should be, the public, with few exceptions, would not grudge the money expended upon their relief.

Let it be here distinctly understood, that, speaking in general terms, I wish to lay no specific blame on either the guardians, or the paid officers who administer the Poor Law. With few exceptions, I know nothing to lead me to think that the law is carried out otherwise than with diligence and faithfulness—I would say with efficiency, if I could—for I am especially desirous to give all credit to a body of men with whom I have been for years associated, and who give much valuable time and thought to the all but hopeless task of reconciling the claims of the deserving poor with those of the heavily taxed ratepayer—but efficiency is impossible.

Few guardians who leave the relief-table of a union connected with a populous city, but must feel (if they think on the subject) that they have been both niggardly and wasteful—niggardly, because to some specially deserving case they have

not done enough; and wasteful, because to the idle and dissolute they have been compelled to grant something which goes to maintain vice instead of relieving distress.

Guardians have some difficulty in getting at the merits of the case of an applicant for relief, but far more difficulty in dealing with an undeserving case when it is ascertained. Why is this? Do not the Poor Laws, passed in 1834 and since, distinctly decree that all able-bodied applicants for relief shall work, as the condition of assistance? They do. This is the spirit and intention of the law, and it is assumed by some that it is carried out. But it is not. The so-called labour performed in most poor-houses is, in amount, of a very unsatisfactory character.

What is required is labour, enforced with certainty as to time engaged and quantity performed; but this cannot be brought into full practice until a far more complete subdivision is made between the aged, feeble, imbecile, and young, and the able-bodied paupers and vagrants. The management of feeble and that of able-bodied paupers are two very distinct pieces of business, and require agencies with different qualifications. For the one class a manager, with the quality of administrator and nurse, is the most fitting; for the other, the controller should possess the characteristic more approaching that of a jailer or taskmaster.

To the benevolent mind, unversed in Poor-Law administration, this rigid line may appear harsh; but all who have had much experience know that there is the habitual pauper as well as the habitual criminal—that it is the chronic and hereditary pauperism which is impoverishing the ratepayers, embarrassing the guardians, and bringing discredit upon the whole system of Poor-Law administration.

Converse with whatever practical men you will, all admit the efficacy and necessity of the labour-test, and spasmodic efforts are constantly being made by guardians to put the test into practice. But occasional energy in this direction is of little avail. Guardians change, and officers relax in their efforts,

and the wily tramp and habitual pauper get help with little or no labour. And this need surprise no one while the feeble and the able-bodied paupers are all under one roof and one management. It has been found, in effect, that the labour-test is not continuously applied. The task of making a constitutionally lazy man work is too arduous and important to be united with duties of a totally different character. Let a man or woman once take parish relief, and thus lose his or her self-respect, and they will always look to the rates for assistance in periods of difficulty and trial. Nothing but the consciousness that he will be made to labour hard for any relief he may get will prevent a man, once on the rates, from applying again. This may be called a platitude; but platitude or no platitude, while everybody says it is true, little effort is made vigorously to grapple with the evil. The principle to be taught is self-reliance, and this can only be taught by compulsion. If a man feels he has something else to depend on other than his own exertions, the chances are he will exert himself very little. The same principle applies to others beside the very poor. I know many men of whom it may safely be said, that, had they inherited a few hundred pounds, they would never have made the effort to acquire the means they now possess; and, where the self-respect of a man is at its lowest ebb, as in the case of a pauper, the best, the only moral and physical training you can give him is to teach him self-reliance by making him work. Rely on it, we want facilities for carrying out the law as already prescribed for habitual paupers, as well as for habitual criminals.

I will give two or three cases from unions, more as illustrations than proofs, in support of my statement, that the labour-test is not vigorously and regularly applied. I believe it will be admitted that, as a rule, it is not applied as it ought to be. I do not deny its partial application, nor do I question the wish and intention of guardians generally to adopt it. My assertion is, that it is not applied with regularity.

The first illustration I shall give is from the Cardiff Union.

On the 14th of August last, a guardian, Mr. Bird, introduced and carried a resolution at the Board, "That tramps should not receive any food at the tramp ward until they had performed an allotted portion of work."* He stated that during the past year they had relieved 5,420 paupers in the tramp ward, and that, during the past month, the number had been 823, or nearly equal to 10,000 persons in a year. He also observed that they were all able-bodied paupers, and the majority of them between thirty and forty years of age. He then referred to what had been done in other unions, and showed that, where the system of applying the labour-test had been carried out, the number of tramps had been very materially reduced. The effect of this resolution was speedily shown, for, before the month was out, the following report was issued—"That owing to the new system of compelling tramps to perform a certain amount of work before giving relief, only 8 had been relieved during the past week, as compared with 198 in the corresponding week of last year." The experience of the following weeks does not continue to show so marked a disproportion between this year and last, but the diminution continues to be very satisfactory.

My next illustration is taken from the parish of Liverpool, where, in 1868, 15,000 paupers were in the receipt of relief. Under the head of a "Reformed Workhouse," I extract from the newspapers of September, 1869, that at a meeting of the Liverpool Workhouse Committee, held on Thursday, the Vestry Clerk reported—"That there was not, at that moment, in the establishment, a single man whom the doctors would certify as able bodied and fit to work." The editor, in his comments, says—"This is an unprecedented state of things, the workhouse having been notorious as an asylum for lazy, idle, and dissolute persons." I wrote to the Vestry Clerk, and asked him

* I think the resolution would have been more humane, and not less effective, if it had said, "should not leave the poor-house," instead of "should not receive any food until," &c.

if he would kindly explain to me the cause of this "Reformation." That gentleman, Mr. Hagger, answered me very courteously, in the following terms:—"That, while not admitting fully the justice of the editor's comments, there is sufficient truth in them to give us cause for gratulation at the present state of the workhouse. For a long time prior to December, 1867, our workhouse had been so crowded as not to allow of proper classification. The able-bodied men and the partially disabled were placed together, and the internal discipline of the house was (perhaps it might be urged, necessarily so) very lax. About the date referred to, the Select Vestry hired another workhouse, and the governor of the principal one resigned his office. The new man was a firm disciplinarian, and the labour-test was thenceforth rigidly enforced in all cases where the medical men would certify that the men were fit to undergo it. These are, I believe, the main causes for the present state of things. Side by side with this, there has been increased vigilance on the part of the Relief Committee, of the Vestry, and of the relieving officers, so that, upon the whole, we have, throughout the past year, experienced a diminution in pauperism in each division of the relief organization—in-door, out-door and vagrants. In proof of this, I copy from the Liverpool statistical return, published weekly, for the week ending Saturday, the 28th of August, 1869, the following return of paupers in and out of the workhouse, in that week and the corresponding week of 1868:—

		1868.		1869.		Reduction.
In-door Relief	..	3,465	..	2,746	..	719
Out-door	..	11,535	..	10,769	..	766
		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>
Total	..	15,000	..	13,515	..	1,485
		<hr/>		<hr/>		<hr/>

The reduction is 10 per cent. in numbers, and the saving £160 per week. The fact, that among the 13,500 paupers receiving relief in 1869, there was not a single man whom the doctors could certify as able-bodied and fit to work, is to me most conclusive evidence of the efficiency of the labour-test. Some, per-

haps, will suggest that other causes may have tended to bring about the result shown. I know of none. There certainly has been no decrease in the population of Liverpool, and I doubt if it can be said that trade is so much better in 1869 than in 1868 as to account for more than a fraction of the result." Mr. Hagger concludes his letter by saying—"I fully believe that a good labour-test, strictly and persistently enforced, is the *one* thing upon which we must rely in dealing with able-bodied pauperism."

I will now allude to three places in which no recent energy has been put forth in enforcement of the labour-test, and which, I think, will illustrate more correctly than the cases of Cardiff and Liverpool, its application or partial application in unions generally.

The Poor Law Report for 1867-8, in reference to the Metropolitan Unions, says—"The crowded state of the workhouses, which precluded the application of the workhouse-test to the able bodied, and the difficulty of providing out-door labour on a large scale, have alike tended to increase the numbers of the able-bodied class applying for relief, and caused increased expenditure."

The following is in reply to an enquiry made of the Clerk to the Lambeth Union—"We do not apply the labour-test either adequately or regularly. Our means for doing so are insufficient; and we shall do better when we have our new house."

I will now allude to the Bristol Union. The following is the labour-test adopted there for able-bodied paupers:—Rise at six, breakfast at seven, begin work at eight and go on till twelve, when they dine; resume work at two, and continue it until half-past five or six—about eight hours in all. The labour consists in cultivating the land, and other out-door employment in fine weather; and in wet weather stone-breaking and oakum picking. The women are engaged in washing, cleaning and oakum picking. It cannot be said that this

amount of work is sufficient to deter the indolent from coming upon the rates of the union, especially those who have once tasted workhouse bread.

These people possess little sensitiveness or pride, and have no scruple about again living at the public expense, and I fear that the regular living and easy work invite rather than deter the entrance of many into the workhouse.

These illustrations, taken from Cardiff, Liverpool, London, Bristol, and Lambeth, represent generally the application of the labour-test in large unions throughout the kingdom. In the two former, recently-displayed activity in its application; in the three latter, its imperfect application in a very mild form.

It will not have escaped observation that the Cardiff report speaks of the "New System" of compelling to work, &c., and that the Liverpool Workhouse is spoken of as a "Reformed Workhouse." This is in 1869, 35 years after the Act had passed which insisted on labour as the condition of relief to the able bodied. The fact that the practice now being carried out at Cardiff and Liverpool is styled "New System" and "Reformation," proves conclusively that while that portion of the Poor Law *dictum* which prescribes labour as the condition of relief is not absolutely a dead letter, it is ordinarily very imperfectly complied with. Newspapers lay hold of these announcements and copy them as something remarkable, and this is another proof that the full application of the labour-test is more novel than constant, the exception rather than the rule.

The mover of the labour-test resolution at Cardiff urged as an incentive to the adoption of test-labour what was doing in other unions, and I know that, in most administrations, there is an occasional rousing up upon the subject, and "work" is the order of the day; but a relapse too often takes place, and the lazy pauper resumes the ascendancy, and revels in his indolence.

The money saved in the Parish of Liverpool, in consequence

of its improved administration, is £160 per week, or more than £8,000 per annum. This saving is, of course, an important object, but is by no means the greatest advantage gained, either to the town of Liverpool or to society. The gross number of persons receiving parish assistance in 1868 over those receiving it in 1869, was 1,485. Take it, that of this number, 1,485, 1000 only are employed, and that their average earnings are 8/- per week, or £20,800 per annum, this alone is no mean advantage; yet there is a greater benefit in the improved condition of the would-be paupers by the enforced practice of industry, by the self-reliance engendered, and by the better moral tone that must exist in those who trust to themselves for subsistence rather than to ratepayers, many of whom are only a degree better off than themselves.

But it will be said, "What of the remaining 485? You have disposed of the 1000. Admitting your calculations, as to their position and earnings, to be moderately accurate, are you content that the remainder shall be thrown upon other unions, or allowed to beg or thieve for a maintenance?" My reply is—First, That other unions should enforce the labour-test as it is done in Liverpool, there would then be no advantage in one union over another. Second, That there is no law to prevent either unconvicted beggars or thieves making the workhouse their temporary home, as they can obtain their discharge at any time.

Let it be recollected that my argument is not for the exclusion of any from relief in the workhouse. Admit all who apply. But let the condition of relief prescribed by law, "work," be strictly enforced. If the *residuum* I have alluded to do not enter the workhouse, because they will not comply with its conditions, any hardship they may suffer will be self-imposed.

With reference to "work," I am not advocating it so much as being directly profitable to the union, as for its beneficial effect upon the pauper himself. There is no doubt of the

desirability of a man's doing work enough while in the house to maintain himself and family, and pay for his supervision—and this ought to be attempted; but, because it is found difficult or impracticable, this should not cause the slightest relaxation in the discipline. The directly economical benefit derived from pauper-labour is a very subordinate part of the good to be effected. To show a lazy or apathetic man that work is the stern necessity of his existence is the paramount, though indirect advantage. I am not so uncharitable as to assert that all able-bodied men or women who apply for relief are lazy. Many of them would work, if the employment could be obtained without much effort on their part. These applicants for relief are often constitutionally apathetic—they want *will*, and the labour-test tends to remove the apathy, and create the *will*.

These remarks about productive labour are suggested by the preceding extract from the Report of the Poor Law Board, about the “difficulty of providing out-door labour on a large scale having tended to increase the numbers of able-bodied paupers applying for relief.” I maintain (where productive labour is not obtainable) that shot-drill, as performed in barracks, or the removal of stones or other substances from one place to another, and back again, is better than the incomplete or partial application of the labour-test.

In the usual arrangements of a poor-house, with all classes under one roof, experience shows that, as a rule, the labour-test is not strictly carried out. It may be said that it might be, and that it ought to be. This is, however, an intensely practical business, and long experience shows that, ordinarily, it is not carried out with any approach to efficiency. Nor can it be expected. Take, for example, a workhouse with upwards of a thousand inmates of all classes, and it would be surprising if the master were able to insist upon ten hours' hard work, such as would be performed by a brickmaker or a dock-labourer, from able-bodied paupers, whose aim is to live

without work, and many of whom possess an amount of craft not shared by industrious men. At the same time that the master has to deal with this difficult class, he has to exercise a general supervision over all the other work done, deal kindly with the sick, the aged, the young, and imbecile, control the accounts, the commissariat, and the subordinate officers. It may be done, but seldom is. It will perhaps be argued that in a large workhouse there is a superintendent of labour, whose duty it is to control the workers. This is true, but his office is of too subordinate, too incidental a character. The men he has to deal with require more vigour than he has authority to exercise, and the place they work in should be redolent of nothing but labour.

This brings me to a more specific reply to the question, "In what respects may the Administration of the Poor Law be improved?" My answer is, That the Law should be consistent with itself, by authorizing greater facilities for entire classification, so that the defect now caused by its incompleteness may be removed. The case is this, that a law exists prescribing work as a condition for relief, but neglects to provide arrangements by which such law can be enforced. I submit that full classification cannot be made, nor can the labour-test be effectually applied, and the object of the Poor Law accomplished, until, in populous districts, the law directs the area of administration to be extended by throwing two or three unions into one. Further, there should be two distinct establishments in each union—the one being for the able bodied, the partially able bodied, and those healthy aged who are fit for some work, the vagrants and the casual poor, which for the sake of distinction I will call the "*work-house*," and its proposed occupants the "able." The other establishment should partake more of the almshouse and infirmary combined, and should contain the aged who are unfit for work, the sick, the maimed, the imbecile, and otherwise infirm poor. These, for convenience, I will term the "feeble," and their place of

residence the "hospital." Of the children I will speak in a subsequent portion of this paper.

The "*work-house*" should be placed as near the greatest mass of the population in the union as circumstances will admit, so that no unnecessary hardship should be inflicted by compelling a fatigued man or family to travel far for their night's lodging and food. Let a man be either an habitual or hereditary pauper—call him what you will—let his character be bad as it may, it is contrary to the spirit of English law, contrary to the best instincts of our nature, unkind, and often cruel, to compel applicants for food and shelter at night, who may be both destitute and weary, to walk four or five miles before they can obtain it. Yet this they must do if they would obtain relief from either of two unions closely connected with this city. This establishment should be, as its name implies, a house for work—full, continuous labour of ten hours' duration for the able bodied—work of a fitting character, and moderate in amount for the partially able—in fact, work for all resident, either temporarily or permanently in the *work-house*. The only exception would be in the case of young children, and the women nursing them, who would come in as casuals, and this exception is unavoidable. The *work-house* being conveniently situated, able-bodied men might work here whose families were not in the house, receiving nearly the whole relief in food for themselves and families. The design of the place, the character and the business of the place, would all be included in the word "work." All able-bodied paupers entering it, and bringing no "way ticket," must discharge their task before leaving. Of course, such an establishment should be presided over by a strict disciplinarian, with authority to punish those who were refractory, or did not perform their allotted share of labour. With this officer should be associated a matron, who would unite energy with firmness, tact, and kindness. Able women who come into a workhouse are too often of bad character, and more difficult to control

than men. With such an executive, released from the multifarious duties of an ordinary poor-house, and supervised by an active committee, a vigorous and satisfactory administration might reasonably be expected, and the blot upon the present administration of the Poor Law, by its incomplete application of the labour test, be removed.

I will now refer to the "hospital" or "almshouse," which should contain all the adults unfit for work. It will be seen at once with how much greater facility the wants of the aged, the sick, and imbecile, can be supplied when they are detached from the able paupers. Careful nursing should here be the rule, together with a more varied diet than is usually allowed in the present poor-houses. To the decrepid and helpless many comforts might be granted, and the chief officer, being relieved of the control of the able bodied, could give more attention to the convenience and well-being of his helpless family. In addition to this, the regulation as to visitors, and their gifts, might be considerably modified. A friend of mine has said "Let the union find bread (you have no right to be generous with public money), but let private charity put a little butter on the parish bread—viz., give an easy chair, a few prints, books, &c." In a house devoted exclusively to the feeble and the afflicted, these and other comforts might be accepted from the kindly disposed. Great difficulties naturally exist in offering increased comforts under the present system, but there is a large amount of benevolent feeling in store, and the assurance that kind attention and gifts would be bestowed on deserving objects, would incite an enlarged generosity which might be accepted with few restrictions. Some of the well-conducted among the partially able paupers should be employed to assist the paid nurses, but no able pauper ought to be so employed.

Although no general declaration has been made by the Poor Law Board in favour of the more complete separation of the different classes of paupers, I see, by their Report of 1867-8,

that "progress had been made in the separation of the Work-houses from the Infirmarys." Steps have also been taken under the Act for the formation of district schools.

The parish of Lambeth is about to build a new workhouse, and appropriate the old one as an infirmary, and it has already separate schools at some miles distance. I also notice that an order has been issued by the Poor Law Board to unite the City of London Union with the East and West London Unions; but while I imagine this is being done, primarily, for the purpose of equalizing the rates, a fine opportunity will be afforded for the classification of the paupers.

I will now only say, in reference to the carrying out of this more perfect classification, that it may be done with half the revolutionary process of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. The present poor-houses would be available with scarcely any alteration. Three unions being united, the buildings would suffice for the workhouse, the hospital, and the school—all the difference being that each class would be housed in the establishment appropriated for its especial use.

I have as yet said nothing of pauper children or of their education. Children, of course, are dependent on the rates from no fault of their own, and should be kept as much as possible from contact with pauperism, and separate from both the poor-house and its associations. With this view, district schools have been established, where children from various poor-houses are educated, altogether away from adult paupers. This is, undoubtedly, an improvement upon bringing up in the workhouse, but no continuous training of children in masses can be so beneficial as the habits of domestic life learnt in the homes of thrifty and industrious cottagers.

The system of boarding out pauper children is, in Scotland, universal, and has existed for twenty years—the children, of course, being under complete supervision by inspectors. Sir John M'Neil, the head of the Poor Law administration there says, in giving his evidence before a select Committee of the

House of Commons, that "the result is the most satisfactory thing he has to report in respect of the administration of the Poor Law." In proof of its success, I may state that a workhouse is now building in Edinburgh for 1000 inmates, at a cost of £35,000, and no provision whatever is being made for children.

Paupers are said to be a special race, and the Royal Commissioners on Education in England have reported, "That pauperism is hereditary, and that the children born and bred of that class furnish the great mass of the pauper and criminal population." This is the result of the system of rearing children in masses in workhouse schools. Now, mark what Sir J. M'Neil further says as to the results of the boarding-out system in Scotland: "The effects are such that ultimately the children melt into the population, and you can afterwards find no trace of them, they are not distinguishable from the people with whom they have been brought up."

This seems conclusive enough, but to show that the separate workhouse school or district school is not altogether bad, I give the following extract from a short account of the Bristol Workhouse School, furnished me by the schoolmaster, Mr. Hughes:—"The Bristol Workhouse School may be compared to a district school—it is completely apart, and is a separate establishment from the Workhouse. On the school premises there is nothing to remind the children of pauperism. There the teaching and training are made specially subservient to the requirements of this class. In them, they are under constant supervision, and receive an education equal to that given in a National or British School, in conjunction with field labour and useful trades, by which they acquire habits of industry. This mode of training has succeeded most satisfactorily with the boys, as *several hundreds* can be pointed out who have left the school, and are succeeding creditably in various positions in life—some as commercial travellers, clerks, shipwrights, sailors (one is a sea captain), servants, master tradesmen,

journeymen tailors, shoemakers and blacksmiths, sergeants and corporals in the Army (that were drafted from the work-house band), common day labourers; six are in business on their own account in the city, others have pushed their way to America, Australia, and New Zealand, one is in the employ of the Oriental Steamship Co., another is in the band on board the *Galatea* (Prince Alfred's ship), and in the receipt of 30/- per week and board—and some few have fallen into crime. The number of this class is very small. During the last twenty years, upwards of 1,800 have passed through the boys' school, and of this number, *five* are in the men's wards in the work-house, three of whom from affliction were never physically capable of providing for themselves. To specify interesting facts of boys who have left us, and to quote gratifying extracts from their letters to us, would fill a small volume."

The account of the girls' school is not equally satisfactory, and is as follows:—"Girls sent to service during the last five years, 990; of these, 22 returned to the house, 9 of whom turned out badly; the other 13, returned for no bad conduct, have gone to service again, and are doing well."

I believe that the Bristol Workhouse School is a favourable example of the system, and that it is superior to many work-house schools.

But I wish to have both sides stated. My leanings are distinctly in favor of the boarding-out system. The chief objection to it, however, appears to be in the difficulty of finding proper persons with whom to board the children. Could suitable cottagers be found to take them, and a full control be exercised by proper inspection, the experiment of a system that has answered so well in Scotland should certainly be tried in England. I find that, in England, the plan is in operation in the following Unions—viz., Leominster, Swindon, Eton, Caistor, Horncastle, King's Norton, and Chorlton; I also notice that resolutions in favor of its adoption have been passed by the Boards of Guardians of Merthyr, Stone (in Staffordshire),

and Berwick-upon-Tweed, and that, at the latter place, a Committee of Ladies has been appointed to aid in carrying the plan into operation. The subject is very fully treated in Miss F. Hill's "Children of the State," and in a pamphlet written by Colonel Grant, R.E. (each published by Macmillan, London). Answers to objections, questions of cost and other details of the boarding-out system will be found fully stated in the latter publication. Both works will repay perusal.

I learn, as the opinion of officers of several large unions, that a check needs to be put upon paupers going in and out of the workhouse at pleasure. Gangs of the vilest of both sexes do it in populous districts continually, using the place as their hotel. To shut the doors against them is not to be thought of; but magistrates should have power to order any pauper, habitually discharging him or herself, and soon after seeking re-admission, to be detained for a short time in the workhouse. This would tend to destroy the attraction of a workhouse life for these roughs as much as stricter discipline, but can only be effected by fresh legislation.

Briefly to recapitulate, my suggestions are—

1st—That several unions should be thrown into one, for the purposes both of rating and administration.

2nd—That in each union, those able to work, and all able bodied, should be sent to the "*Work-house*." That those unable to work should be sent to an establishment, being a combination of the Infirmary and Almshouse, and called the "*Hospital*." That the children should be sent either to the district school, or boarded out in cottages.

3rd—That a power should be given by law to detain paupers who are continually passing in and out of the workhouse.

4th—I will add what I have not before alluded to, that a closer supervision than now exists is an imperative necessity. The Poor Law Board should be required to ascertain, by

frequent and real inspection, whether their rules are carried into execution. There should also be a more efficient audit, by officers of the Poor Law Board giving their whole time to their duties. A careful comparison of management and expenditure, by means of a close inspection and a good audit, would enable the Board to insist upon uniformity of system among the various unions, or a sufficient reason to the contrary (which there is not), and that uniformity could mean little less than a bringing of the worst managed up to a level with the best.

Few subjects deserve more the attention of the philanthropist than that of the pauperism existing in a highly-civilized community. The presence of so much want in the midst of so much abundance is painful to all sensitive minds. Its direct money cost in local taxation is seven millions sterling per annum. The hopelessness of success in giving moral and religious training to people in a state of destitution is admitted. Looking at the subject as a whole, or taking it in detail, it is worthy of the deep consideration of the master minds of the present day. The further power of law must be called into operation to check the growing evil, but it must be the power of law tempered by Christian love, and by a full consciousness of our own defects.

Discussions on this and kindred topics have done something towards giving effect to recent legislation, and I entertain a sanguine hope that the deliberations of this Conference may further assist in the improvement both of our laws and of their administration.





